

## What counties served by Cascade Natural Gas are included in SBCC Zone 5?

Cascade serves the following counties in SBCC Zone 5:

- |          |           |            |               |
|----------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| ■ Adams  | ■ Chelan  | ■ Franklin | ■ Walla Walla |
| ■ Benton | ■ Douglas | ■ Grant    | ■ Yakima      |

## What limitations to the use of natural gas in new residential buildings are being proposed?

Currently, the SBCC is considering three proposals that would enact limitations on the use of natural gas in new residential buildings.

### Proposal 21-GP1-064

This code proposal would require new residential buildings to be built all-electric. The building and building site would be prohibited from containing any combustion equipment or plumbing for combustion equipment.

### Proposal 21-GP1-065

This code proposal would require new residential buildings to install heat pump space heaters for space conditioning.

### Proposal 21-GP1-066

This code proposal would require new residential buildings to install heat pump water heaters for domestic hot water heating.

Cascade Natural Gas staff is available to answer questions for builders and contractors in our service area to help identify continued opportunities for the use of high-performance natural gas equipment in new residential construction.

To learn more about these proposals, please follow the QR code below, or see [www.sbcc.wa.gov/2021-code-adoption-cycle](http://www.sbcc.wa.gov/2021-code-adoption-cycle).



### *How can I get in touch with Cascade staff for questions?*

*For questions related to the WA State Energy Code and how to comply:*

**Ty Jennings, Building Codes Specialist**

Monday thru Friday 8am to 5pm PST

[Ty.Jennings@CNGC.com](mailto:Ty.Jennings@CNGC.com)

509-975-0154

*For questions related to Cascade's Energy Efficiency Program:*

**Energy Efficiency Team Hotline**

Monday thru Thursday 8am-5pm PST

[conserve@CNGC.com](mailto:conserve@CNGC.com)

866-626-4479

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# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Natural Gas for the 2021 WA State Energy Code



*In the Community to Serve®*

### Is there a ban on natural gas in new construction in Washington?

With the 2021 WA State Energy Codes, the State Building Code Council (SBCC) has voted to approve limitations on the use of natural gas in new commercial buildings in WA state effective July 1, 2023. While there is currently no statewide restriction on the use of natural gas in residential buildings, the SBCC is considering proposals that may prohibit the use of natural gas in residential buildings.

At the local level, there are restrictions on the use of natural gas space and water heating equipment in new commercial buildings, and for certain retrofits and remodel activities in some Washington cities, including Seattle and Bellingham.

### What restrictions to the use of natural gas have been passed by the SBCC?

On April 22, the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) approved changes significantly limiting the use of natural gas in new and retrofitted commercial buildings. Effective July 1, 2023, new commercial construction in WA may not include natural gas equipment for space or water heat, with a few exceptions. Electric heat-pumps will be required to meet space and water heating needs. Electric receptacles must also be installed next to certain natural gas appliances in dwelling units (mostly applies to new multifamily buildings).

The limitations to natural gas usage in the Washington State Energy Code-Commercial (WSEC-C) do not apply to all natural gas equipment, nor does it apply to low-rise (3 stories or less) multifamily or single family residential buildings. Cascade staff is available to answer questions for builders and contractors in our service area to help identify continued opportunities for the use of high-performance natural gas equipment in new homes and buildings.

### Do the SBCC commercial code restrictions on natural gas space and water heat apply to multifamily construction?

Yes. The commercial code covers multifamily construction 4 stories and higher.

### Are there incentives available to build new high-efficiency construction utilizing natural gas?

Yes. Cascade's Energy Efficiency department is pleased to offer a suite of rebates for energy efficiency upgrades to new residential and commercial natural gas buildings. These include rebates for ENERGY STAR® and Built Green certified homes. All residential new homes incentives can be found on our website. Commercial buildings incentives, including custom options, are available as well.

To apply for or to learn more about the available energy efficiency rebates, please visit the QR code or website listed below:



[www.cngc.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.cngc.com/energy-efficiency)

### What are the allowed uses of natural gas in new commercial buildings?

The use of natural gas equipment other than natural gas space and water heating equipment in commercial buildings has not been restricted as part of the recent WSEC-C. However, a new electric connection must be placed next to any natural gas range, cooktop, oven, clothes dryer, or water heater in dwelling units within a new multifamily building.

**Allowed** uses of natural gas space and water heating equipment in new commercial buildings and retrofit/remodel scenarios are as follows:

#### All Regions:

- Natural gas as equipment other than space and water heat [Exc. to C403.1]
- Small systems that account for less than 5% of the total building heating capacity for conditioned floor area (natural gas fireplaces) [Exc. 8, C403.1.4]
- Natural gas for industrial processes [Exc. to C403.1]
- Buildings served by existing district energy systems [Exc. 11, C403.1.4 and Exc. 4, C404.2.1]
- Institutional Group I-2 and Group I-3 occupancies required to have full emergency back-up systems [Exc. 18, C403.1.4 and Exc. 7, C404.2.1]
- Replacement of steam boilers [Exc. 5, C503.4.6]
- Retrofits/renovations in existing buildings for HVAC systems where compliance “would trigger an unplanned utility electrical service upgrade” [Exc. 6, C503.4.6]
- Like-for-like replacements for failing space heating equipment that requires immediate replacement and where no other HVAC work is planned [Exc. 7, C503.4.6]
- Like-for-like replacements for a single fuel-fired service water heating appliance with a unit that is the same type and has the same or higher efficiency and the same or lower capacity [Exc. 1, C503.5]
- Replacements of natural gas storage water heaters with an input of 75,000 Btu/h or less [Exc. 2.2, C503.5]
- Replacement of natural gas instantaneous water heaters with an input of 200,000 Btu/h or less and 2 gallons or less of storage [Exc. 2.3, C503.5]
- Instances where the code official determines that existing building constraints make compliance technically infeasible for water heating [Exc. 3, C503.5]
- Hospitals, research facilities and other buildings where natural gas is required for “specific needs that cannot practicably be served by heat pump or other space heating systems.” where approved by the code official. [Exc. 9, C403.1.4]
- Natural gas may also be used to supplement electric heat pump water heaters. The heat pump must meet 50% of a building's water heating needs. [C404.2.1.1]

#### SBCC Zone 5 (East of the Mountains):

- Auxiliary heating for air-to-water heat pumps [Exc. 6, C403.1.4]
- Kitchen make-up air tempering [Exc. 10, C403.1.4]
- Dedicated outdoor air system energy recovery ventilator (ERV) auxiliary heat [Exc. 16, C403.1.4]